

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 06779 120538Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8211
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6779

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS JO UK
SUBJ: DAYAN AND HUSSEIN: DID THEY MEET?

1. SPECULATION ON WHETHER FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN SAW OR CONTACTED HUSSEIN DURING HIS RECENT LONDON VISIT REMAINS A PRIME TOPIC OF INTEREST ON THE LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL ELLIPTICAL REFERENCES TO SUCH A MEETING IN THE ISRAELI PRESS. ONE OF ISRAEL'S BEST INFORMED POLITICAL PUNDITS, YOSEF HARIF, EDGED THE CLOSEST WE HAVE SEEN IN PRINT TO A PUBLIC ADMISSION OF SUCH CONTACT IN HIS WEEKLY COLUMN IN MA'ARIV LAST WEEKEND (COPY POUCHED TO INR AND NEA/IAI).

2. THE SCENT OF SOMETHING IN THE AIR OTHER THAN SMOKE BECAME STRONGER WHEN, DURING A CONVERSATION LAST WEEK, DAYAN STRONGLY IMPLIED TO ME THAT HE HAD RECEIVED DIRECTLY FROM HUSSEIN JORDANIAN VIEWS ON U.S. POLICY REGARDING
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3. THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOTHING TO SNUFF OUT FURTHER CONJECTURE ON THIS SUBJECT WHEN, DURING A RADIO INTERVIEW ON SEPTEMBER 5, HE DISMISSED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER DAYAN AND HUSSEIN HAD MET IN LONDON BY AIRILY ADVISING HIS INTERVIEWER TO PUT THE QUESTION DIRECTLY

TO DAYAN.

4. ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT I DECIDED TO BRACE DAYAN ON THE QUESTION DURING MY MEETING WITH BEGIN, WEIZMAN AND HIM ON SEPTEMBER 7. SOMEWHAT MISCHIEVOUSLY I SAID I DID NOT WANT TO EMBARRASS HIM BY ASKING DIRECTLY WHETHER IN FACT HE HAD SEEN HUSSEIN OR BEEN IN CONTACT WITH HIM DURING HIS BRIEF SORTIE TO LONDON AUGUST 22. BEGIN SNICKERED AND DAYAN SUDDENLY APPEARED TERRIBLY UNCOMFORTABLE. CLUTHCHING HIS FACE WITH BOTH HANDS AND PEERING AT ME FROM BEHIND HIS EYE-PATCH HE REPLIED SARDONICALLY, "AMBASSADOR, I AM MOST GRATEFUL YOU HAVE NOT ASKED ME." IT WAS GOOD THEATER AND CAME VERY CLOSE TO ANSWERING THE QUESTION.

5. FINALLY OVER A PRIVATE LUNCH TABLE YESTERDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, DAYAN HELD FORTH AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT HUSSEIN'S VIEWS, INCLUDING SOME DIRECT QUOTES. WE SPARRED INCONCLUSIVELY ABOUT LOCALES, BUT THE EVIDENCE WAS PERSUASIVE. I AM NOW CONFIDENT THEY DID MEET RECENTLY. AND DAYAN ALSO HINTED TANTALIZINGLY AT ANOTHER RECENT MEETING WITH "ONE OF HIS OTHER NEIGHBORS"-- PROBABLY AN EGYPTIAN VERY CLOSE TO SADAT. IN RETROSPECT THE HUSSEIN MEETING SHOULD HAVE BEEN NO SURPRISE. I NOW RECALL THAT DURING ONE OF MY FIRST CONVERSATIONS WITH DAYAN AFTER MY ARRIVAL HE TOLD ME HOW MUCH HE WANTED

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TO SEE HUSSEIN AGAIN. HE SAID THEY HAD NOT TALKED TOGETHER FOR TWO YEARS AND HE FELT A STRONG NEED TO MEET WITH HIM. FROM HERE IT NOW LOOKS AS IF THIS HAS HAPPENED. LEWIS

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